

## BRIEFS

### FED APPEAL HEARD ON HOUSING ALLOWANCE

CHICAGO (BP) — Lawyers for the U.S. Department of Justice and Becket Fund for Religious Liberty defended the constitutionality of the ministerial housing allowance Oct. 24 before a three-judge panel of the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit in Chicago. The judges head oral arguments regarding a 2017 opinion by Barbara Brandriff Crabb, a senior U.S. district judge in Wisconsin nominated by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter. She ruled for the second time in four years that the allowance is an unconstitutional violation of the First Amendment clause that prohibits government establishment of religion.

### GREAR TAKES STAND ON MYANMAR ATROCITIES

WASHINGTON (BP) — Southern Baptist Convention President J.D. Greear has joined a coalition urging the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump to label as genocide the brutalities against religious and ethnic minorities in Myanmar, also known as Burma. Greear and more than 75 other signers sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo Oct. 17 requesting the official designation in response to what they described as the Myanmar military's "planned, coordinated campaign of mass killings, gang rapes, and other atrocities" against the country's Rohingya Muslim minority.

### MUSEUM SAYS DEAD SEA SCROLLS ARE FORGERIES

WASHINGTON (BP) — Five pieces of papyrus passed off as fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls have been declared fake and removed from display at the Museum of the Bible in Washington, D.C., the museum announced Oct. 22. The findings are based on a battery of tests commissioned months before the items were first displayed in 2017, the museum reported. Many Bible scholars viewed the papyrus with suspicion well before discovery of the fraud.

## \$1.4 million to help disaster efforts

### MS Baptists gear up for next phase of recovery

By William H. Perkins Jr.  
Editor

The Executive Committee of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) on Oct. 23 unanimously approved gifts of over one million dollars for Baptist efforts in areas of the U.S. devastated by Hurricane Florence on Sept. 14 and Hurricane Michael on Oct. 10.

In addition, \$150,000 specifically donated by Mississippi Baptists for disaster relief is being sent to Texas to facilitate recovery from massive flooding in the central and southwest parts of that state over the past three weeks.

The Executive Committee's recommendation reads:

"In response to the devastation caused by the 2018 Hurricanes, the Executive Committee of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board hereby allocates \$500,000 from the Board's Operating Fund for Mississippi's ongoing Disaster Relief efforts in Georgia. Furthermore, the Executive Committee authorizes an additional \$750,000 in sup-



**MEETING VOLUNTEERS** — U.S. Vice President Mike Pence (R) and Florida Gov. Rick Scott (R) talk with Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDRL) volunteers on site at Hiland Park Church in Panama City, FL. SBDRL volunteer teams set up a feeding and recovery site at Hiland Park Church following Hurricane Michael, which hit the Florida Panhandle on Oct. 10 and carved a path of destruction from there through Georgia and the Carolinas. (BP photo courtesy of NAMB)

port of Southern Baptist Disaster Relief efforts in Florida, North Carolina, and South Carolina by distributing \$250,000 to each respective State Convention from the Board's Operating Fund."

Additionally, the Mississippi Baptist Convention disbursed

\$150,000 of Disaster Relief funds from the donor-imposed restricted account to the Texas Baptist Disaster Relief efforts to assist in the recent floods.

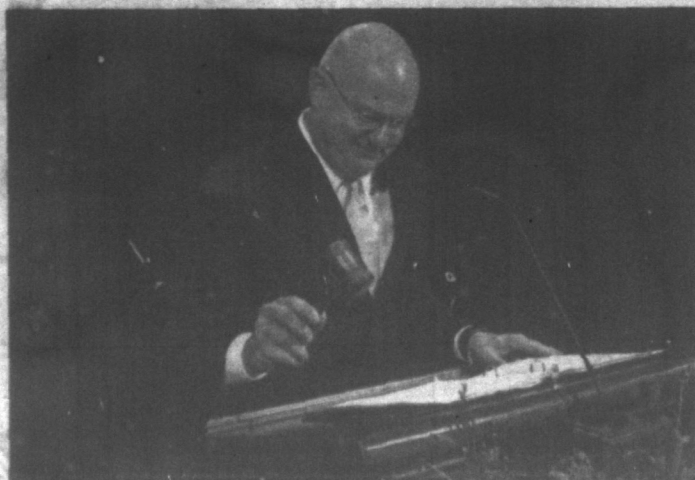
All total, \$1.4 million additional dollars were allocated from the Mississippi Baptist

Convention Board for Disaster Relief in hard hit areas.

"The Executive Committee encourages all Mississippi Baptist Churches to prayerfully consider their support and

see DISASTER on p. 10

## Vincent opens '18 MBC annual meeting



Mississippi Baptist Convention president Mark Vincent, senior pastor of Clarke Venable Church, Decatur, opens the first session of the 183rd annual meeting of the convention Oct. 30 in the Sanctuary of First Church, Jackson. Complete details on the annual meeting will be published in the Nov. 8 issue of The Baptist Record. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

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## From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

### Don't sink the ship

**I**t seems every day brings news of another incredible advancement in communications. Just as our great-grandparents marveled over the convenience and utility of the first party-line telephone that was installed in their home, so are we held spellbound by our generation's remarkable gadgets.

Southern Baptists — and Mississippi Baptists — are taking advantage of the many technologies now at our fingertips to take the Gospel to places on this planet where it has never before been heard. Godless totalitarians have found ways to stifle the communication of our message, but they will never be 100% successful. They never have been, and never will be. God will find a way to reach lost people, through His people.

Despite the growing potential for accomplishing the goal of Matthew 28:10-20 to reach everyone on earth with the Good News through these modern communication technologies, there is a problem: We can say too much.

As the administrators of the greatest missionary-sending effort in the history of Protestantism, Southern Baptists have found ways to place workers in strategic areas of the world that aren't particularly hospitable to their presence. They can't be featured in the headlines or spotlighted on videos, but they are out there. Then there are the teams of local church members on short-term trips who coordinate closely with Mississippi Baptist and Southern Baptist personnel to get into areas where no Christian has trod in generations.

There are at least three ever-present dangers all of them face that should keep us on our knees in prayer around the clock:

■ Many of the areas where Southern Baptists are working are overwhelmingly Muslim, and more than a few have been locked in civil war for many years with Islamic extremists. As we have seen in recent times Christians in these areas have been arrested, tortured, and executed for no other reason than their faith, just like the old times.

■ Even if they aren't harassed and arrested, Southern Baptist

personnel in these areas risk exposure, expulsion, or worse if their profiles get too elevated.

■ Southern Baptist volunteers could be denied admittance to any of the countries hostile to their message. Many borders are already closed to outsiders, and scrutiny of incoming foreigners continues to increase with each passing week as the world becomes a more dangerous place.

We need to understand that Christians are not welcome in many of these countries. As a television commentator put it, "Some of these governments would rather see their children starve before they accept a crumb of bread from the wrong groups." Those "wrong" groups include Christians.

The saying, "Loose lips sink ships," was used extensively in World War II. It means that information from people who talked about troops shipping out and where they were going often resulted in the enemy acquiring the information and thus being able to sink a shipload of soldiers before they reached a faraway battlefield.

Loose lips can also sink many of our Southern Baptist missions efforts. At a time when Christians are at risk all over the world, we must be very careful in what we say or write. For example, neither *The Baptist Record* nor the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board website will identify the countries or specific areas into which workers and volunteers will be traveling when doing so could jeopardize their safety or the success of their mission.

We must also be cautious about what we publish in our church and association newsletters, bulletins, websites — especially websites — and other methods of communication. This is not a call to be timid about our Great Commission efforts, but it is a plea not to hinder that work.

The Baptist Record will keep Mississippi Baptists informed, but with a constant awareness of what's at stake to help guard the safety and security of the many determined and dedicated workers and volunteers.

That's a pledge all of us should take.

## Be an Encourager

**C**onsider the power of an encouraging word.

As told in 2 Chronicles, the Spirit of God came on a prophet named Azariah who had been watching King Asa lead Judah in a season of renewal, calling the people to trust wholly in the Lord.

Azariah's inspired word for Asa is one of the great lines of encouragement in the Old Testament: "But you, be strong and do not lose courage, for there is reward for your work" (2 Chronicles 15:7).

Oftentimes, we feel like our work has no real impact. We wonder, "Am I even making a difference?" If those doubts linger, they sour into discouragement or even despair.

Azariah's words, "Do not lose courage," translate a Hebrew phrase that reads literally, "Don't let your hands drop." What a powerful picture of discouragement. When our hands drop, we are no longer getting the work done, and we open ourselves to the enemy's knockout punch.

Azariah's simple and powerful word of encouragement made all the difference to King Asa. I like the verbs that follow in the story — removed, restored, and gathered. This encouraging word set Asa into another productive season of work. He removed idols, restored the place of worship, and gathered the people of God for worship and covenant renewal.

The power of a thoughtful, prayerful, clear word of encouragement, of course, applies to everyone we know. Our children, our parents, our neighbors and our friends need encouragement. "Encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing," as the apostle Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 5:11.



### Guest opinion

with Hance Dilbeck

Allow me to turn your thoughts to your pastor.

The great threat to your pastor is not moral disqualification, nor is it theological error. Some pastors are forced from the work for these reasons, but not most. Most who let their hands drop from the work do so because, to use biblical language, they grow weary and lose heart. An encouraging word can make all the difference.

Tell your pastor how his work helps you. Let him know that there is a reward, a result from his work. Look him in the eye and say, "You be strong and do not lose courage." Do the same for his wife.

Be like the prophet Azariah. When the Spirit of God stirs your heart to encourage the servant of God, do not be silent. Go meet him, look him in the eye and get his full attention, then deliver a word of encouragement: "But you, be strong and do not lose courage, for there is reward for your work."

*Dilbeck is executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma (BGCO) in Oklahoma City. This column first appeared in the Baptist Messenger (baptistmessenger.com), BGCO's weekly news journal, and is reprinted here courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style.*

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# Erwin brothers chart new course for faith films

**NASHVILLE (BP and local reports)** — Filmmaker Jon Erwin says his father often told him to “dream big, dream bold, dream the impossible.”

Erwin has strived to follow that advice, and earlier this year many of those dreams came true with his hit faith-based movie, *I Can Only Imagine*, which grossed \$83 million to become the No. 1 movie all time from Roadside Attractions.

*I Can Only Imagine* even surpassed that studio's most famous release, the Oscar-winning *Manchester by the Sea*, which grossed \$47 million.

Erwin now is ready to announce his next projects, which involve a new production company and a series of films that are possible only because of the staggering success of *I Can Only Imagine*.

The company even has the support of a Hollywood studio. Erwin calls it “unprecedented.”

“Hollywood responds to success,” Erwin told Baptist Press (BP). “That is the currency in Hollywood.”

Erwin, his brother Andy, and their production partner Kevin Downes have formed a new filmmaking company, Kingdom, which will bring multiple filmmakers together to create a “pipeline of event movies” that proclaim a biblical message and “serve the church,” Erwin told BP.

He likens it to a “Christian Pixar or a Christian Marvel” studio that specializes in a specific area and is able to work on multiple films at one time — but all with the quality moviegoers expect from an Erwin-branded movie. Some movies will be directed by the Erwins, while others will employ other veteran or upcoming directors. Lionsgate will distribute the movies.

Erwin is scheduled to announce Kingdom's first lineup of films at the National Religious Broadcasters meeting



**FAITH VENTURE** — Andy Erwin (left), Kevin Downes (center), and Jon Erwin have formed Kingdom, a new faith-based filmmaking company that will release multiple movies by different directors in what Jon Erwin calls a “leap forward” in faith moviemaking. Kingdom will announce its first slate of movies next March at the National Religious Broadcasters convention. (BP photo courtesy of Erwin Brothers)

March 26 in Anaheim, Ca. At least one of those will be directed by the Erwins.

“We’re going to be unveiling what I feel is a great leap forward and a vision for what can be accomplished in Hollywood on behalf of Christianity, and we’re also going to be unveiling multiple films. It’s going to be real exciting,” Erwin predicted.

One of the movies is expected to focus on the Jesus Movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, according to a Tweet from author and pastor Greg Laurie, who is Erwin's friend and senior pastor of Harvest Fellowship Church in Riverside, Ca.

Erwin told BP he could not confirm the report but did say

he had “fallen in love with the story of America’s last great spiritual awakening.”

Erwin said the vision for Kingdom began with a desire to impact the culture and spread the Gospel through movies, which he calls “America’s second largest export.” A group effort is needed for faith-movies, Erwin said, because he and his brother are limited in what they can do.

A single film takes two to three years to complete. “Andy and I could never make enough content to really move the needle,” he said. “Culturally, it has to be a group initiative.”

The goal is to bring faith-based talent together under one umbrella, he explained.

“We’ve been able to dream big over the last few months and really dream about how to reach a generation,” Erwin said. “If the goal is really to capture the imagination of a generation, then it’s bigger than one content creator and one film. It has to be an initiative that would unite multiple filmmakers under a banner brand.”

“There’s so much competition in Christian films right now. It’s like one of us wins, three of us lose, and unfortunately there’s just not a path for emerging talent in the industry but what if there was a place where instead of competition, there could be cooperation? [What] if there could be a place

where many other filmmakers can make their films and have a trusted banner brand that to a Christian audience, if you see this at the front of the film, and you know the word ‘Kingdom,’ you know it’s going to represent your values?”

Kingdom could not have launched if not for *I Can Only Imagine*’s box office success, Erwin said. The film opened at No. 3, ranked in the Top 10 for five straight weeks, and is the top-grossing independent film of 2018.

“If there’s anything that we should learn as Christians, it is that our movie ticket really is our vote,” Erwin said. “When we show up in mass numbers, culture takes notice.”

It’s sort of like Joshua in the battle of Jericho. He marched around the city seven times, but in the last step everyone had to yell at exactly the same time and that’s when the walls fell down.

“Our industry is like that. When we join our voices together at the same moment, that creates cultural power.”

Lionsgate, Erwin said, understands the faith-based market. “They really caught the vision. In my opinion, there’s never been a movie studio that’s this passionate and willing to dump these kind of resources behind faith movies. It’s truly an exciting time.”

Because Kingdom is autonomous and not owned by Lionsgate, the Erwins and Downes will maintain content control.

“That means that I can say to the audience, ‘We’re not going to let you down,’” Erwin said. “There’s nobody that’s going to swoop in and take control of it. We control the content, you’re not going to be offended, and it’s going to represent your values.”

Other Erwin brothers movies of note include *Woodlawn* (2015), *Moms’ Night Out* (2014), and *October Baby* (2011).

## SBC 2019 annual meeting housing: keep trying

**BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)** — Online hotel reservations are still available for the 2019 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in Birmingham, but rooms within walking distance were exhausted shortly after registration opened Oct. 12.

Bill Townes, SBC Executive Committee vice president for convention finance, answered SBC 2019 housing concerns in an Oct. 21 blogpost at SBVoices.com. An Oct. 17 post by SBC Voices blogger and pastor Adam Blosser, who was inadvertently waitlisted at convention housing venue the Westin Hotel, prompted Townes’ reply.

“In September, we were notified that the Sheraton experi-

enced catastrophic water damage that resulted in a loss of over 400 rooms to our contracted room block at the Sheraton, resulting in a nearly 60% drop in available rooms at the Sheraton,” Townes wrote.

“The net result to the SBC was an overall loss of nearly 50% of rooms in the two co-convention hotels,” Townes explained. “As you can imagine, that 50% drop in rooms caused the remaining available rooms to be snapped up very quickly.”

Within four minutes of online reservation availability, all available rooms were booked at the two convention hotels within walking distance of the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex, Townes said.

As others tried to book rooms, hundreds were waitlisted at the Westin who instead should have been referred to other hotels.

“Unfortunately, rather than just showing unavailable after the hotel room block was full,” Townes said, “the system mistakenly opened up a waitlist on 317 reservations rather than directing them immediately to other hotels.”

Lodging is available at 16 Birmingham hotels, ranging five to 13 miles away from the convention complex.

Those waitlisted at the Westin are being notified by email of the error as early as today (Oct. 22) by housing bureau provider, Experient, respon-

sible for the error. As a concession, Experient has agreed to contribute \$2,500 to SBC ministries through the Cooperative Program Allocation Budget and will work to secure rooms for those already waitlisted who have not secured lodging elsewhere, Townes said.

Townes wrote the blogpost after a team of EC employees spent a week in Birmingham planning the 2019 annual meeting set for June 11-12. He praised Birmingham officials and business leaders for their cooperation and assistance.

“The Sheraton has been extremely helpful in securing additional hotel rooms throughout the city and is also going to provide shuttle assistance,” Townes

said. “With all of the inconvenience to us, we need to [keep] the staff of the Sheraton in our prayers as they are experiencing these same conversations over and over with multiple groups.”

The Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) is helping the EC negotiate parking and ground transportation issues for the annual meeting, Townes said.

“We continue to work with the great Birmingham CVB team to facilitate these issues and are very appreciative of their dedication and service,” Townes said.

Townes’ full blogpost is available at sbcvoices.com. Hotel reservations are available at sbcannualmeeting.net.

It was a typical morning process of getting ready for the events of the day. The only things different were a couple of interruptions to the routine, trying to help a couple of folks with some minor crises. After taking care of those things, I pressed on to get ready and get on my way. I glanced at the clock and realized I was running behind and wondered why I was late. I was buttoning my shirt at the time and began to process in my mind how much time I spent just getting ready to go. It hit me that we spend a lot of time preparing, just getting ready to get into the day. It certainly is time consuming.

By the time I dry my hair (well, scratch that one), tie my shoes, button my shirt, tie my tie, etc., until time has rushed by. That morning, I slowed the process slightly by counting the number of buttons I had on my shirt. I had to button 13 buttons on my shirt. Thirteen! I couldn't believe it, so I counted them again. Yep, 13. My soul and body, what a process I go through. I thought about an old fella who used to run a store in our community. One day he was answering some inquiring minds who wanted to know why he never tied his shoes. "Why?" he said, and then very thoughtfully and philosophically explained he didn't tie them because at the end of the day all he did was untie them. He had a point. Maybe not a good point, but he had a point.

The same kind of thought was going through my mind as I broadened my understanding of how much time all of us spend in life on preparation. Prepa-



## 13 Buttons

ration consumes a bunch of time. It may involve preparation of a meal or preparation for work or preparation for surgery or preparation for a big test. We all are involved in preparation of some type and it usually takes some time. Preparation is important and time consuming because it affects so much of our future.

In Scripture we find that God directs all of us to prepare but over and over, we are reminded of people who were here either to prepare us for eternity or to prepare us to listen to God. John the Baptist was the way-preparer for Jesus. He announced the Lord was coming. Jesus said to us that He goes to prepare a place for us and then He will come and receive us unto Himself. Amos tells us in the great prophet's book that we

are to prepare to meet God. Preparation is important.

It may be that this very day is a day that you need to take time to prepare for something very important that is just ahead of you. Maybe you need to get your mind and your heart shaped in a spiritual configuration and directed by the will and word of God as you have a meeting with someone with whom you have had a disagreement or a broken relationship and you need to thoughtfully prepare how Jesus would guide you and how He would have you act and react. Maybe you've been thinking about your relationship with God and what Jesus did for you when He died on the cross to save you from your sins and you have failed to make eternal preparations, but today you can take

that action. You can turn from your sins to the Savior and make Him the Lord of your life. Romans 10:13 says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

How many times have you had opportunity to prepare but you passed it by, and God has given you another opportunity to get ready and be prepared? It may be that over the last days or weeks, God has used numerous experiences in your life to keep focusing you on the fact that you need to be prepared. You passed by those opportunities but here right before your eyes God is giving you another chance, another opportunity, and you can be prepared. It's amazing how much time we spend in preparation and it's even more amazing how little time we spend in preparation for the life beyond this life. We ignore it, push it aside, do not capture the moment to bring our heart and surrender it to the God who made us and loved us and made provisions that our sins could be forgiven. You can call on the name of the Lord today and He will save you. Don't miss this opportunity.

Here's an incredible thought. It takes less time for you and me to turn to the Lord, ask Him to forgive us of our sins, cleanse us, and give us life everlasting than it takes to button my shirt in the morning. Today, you can do business with God. You can be prepared for eternity. You can trust Jesus today. Be prepared.

The author can be contacted at [directions@mbcb.org](mailto:directions@mbcb.org).

## OBITUARIES

Ottis Farrell Blankenship, age 84, of Clinton, longtime Mississippi Baptist minister and denominational worker, died Oct. 10. He was born Jan. 2, 1934, to the late Mary Eulala Dixon and the late South H. Dixon of Johnson City, TN. He graduated from Science Hill High School in Johnson City and received his bachelor of science in business administration degree from East Tennessee State University in Johnson City. He was active in ROTC during his college years and went on to serve two years in the U.S. Army Signal Corps as a Second Lieutenant. After his time in the service he received his master's degree in religious education from Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth. He also attended the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. Blankenship married JoAnn Oakley of Roanoke, Va., in July 1958. He was an active member of First Church, Clinton, and served as a president of the Mississippi Baptist Religious Education Association. He was also a member of the Southern Baptist Religious Education Association and a lifetime member of the Baptist Communicators Association. Blankenship was minister of education/media at First Church, Hattiesburg, from 1965-1983. He retired from the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board as director of broadcast services in 2001. Blankenship is survived by his wife, JoAnn Blankenship of Clinton; children Kevin (Sylvia) Blankenship of Hattiesburg, Kent Blankenship of Clinton, Kirk (Maria) Blankenship of Brandon, Kellie (Keith) Tadlock of Jackson; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and sister Toni-ta Blankenship Potter. Memorial service



BLANKENSHIP

was held Oct. 15 at First Church, Clinton, with graveside service and interment at Highland Cemetery in Hattiesburg. Wright and Ferguson Funeral Home in Clinton was in charge of arrangements.

Arlis V. Nichols, age 87, longtime Mississippi Baptist pastor and educator, died Oct. 3. He was born Jan. 17, 1931 to Macon and Millie Nichols near Baldwin. After graduation from Baldwin High School, Nichols served in the U. S. Air Force and married Barbara Joann Brown of Enterprise. Following his military service, he graduated from William Carey University in Hattiesburg. Nichols served churches in central and south Mississippi both as associate minister and senior pastor, in addition to several interim pastorates in retirement. He also taught middle school in Clarke County for a number of years. Through the decades Nichols was a popular speaker at banquets, senior adult meetings, conferences, and community events. He was preceded in death by his parents; sister LaVelle; and brother Hollis. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Barbara; sons Mike (Leticia) of Hickory, N.C., and Kevin (Grace) of Cathedral City, Ca.; brother Grady (Bonnie); and one grandchild. A Celebration of Life service was held Oct. 6 at Enterprise Church, followed by interment at Enterprise Cemetery. Wright's Funeral Home of Quitman was in charge of arrangements.



NICHOLS

David F. Granville Jr., age 64, of Cleveland, longtime Mississippi Baptist pastor and educator, died Oct. 3 at Bolivar Medical Center in Cleveland. He was born Feb.

18, 1954, to David F. Sr. and Jean Dannreuther Granville in Chicopee, Ma. He graduated Henry C. Conrad High School in Wilmington, De., in 1972. Granville received a bachelor's degree in physical education from the University of Delaware in Newark, and a master's of education degree from the University of Cincinnati. He later earned a doctor of ministry degree from Andersonville Seminary in Camilla, Ga., and a doctor of theology degree from North-western Seminary in New Port Richey, FL. Granville married Susan T. Truskey on May 22, 1999. In 2004, the family moved to Port Gibson where he was employed at Chamberlain Hunt Academy as a science teacher and later as commandant. They then moved to Mendenhall, where he was headmaster of Simpson Academy. In 2012, the Granvilles moved to Cleveland where he was headmaster of Bayou Academy. Granville was also called to the Gospel ministry. He was pastor of First Church of the Nazarene in Cleveland and Greenville and also ministered at Dockery Church, Cleveland, before taking the pastorate of Interstate Church, Shaw. Granville was preceded in death by his parents and two sons, Steven Taylor and Ryan Taylor. He is survived by his wife of 19 years, Susan Truskey Granville of Cleveland; daughters Vanessa Granville of Washington, D.C., and Claire Granville of Hagerstown, Md.; sons Jordan Granville of Baltimore, Md., Nathan Janni of Hagerstown, Md., and Anthony Janni of Ft. Lauderdale, FL; sisters Jennie Banco of Wilmington, De., and Susan Rector of Middletown, De.; brother Mickey Morrow of Earlville, Md.; and three grand-



GRANVILLE

children. A Celebration of Life Service was held Oct. 8 at the Bayou Academy Gymnasium. Cleveland Funeral Home in Cleveland was charge of arrangements.

Charles William Whitten, age 96, longtime Southern Baptist missionary, died Sept. 27 at his daughter's home in Clinton. Born and reared on a small family farm in Choctaw County, he was baptized at age eight by Beulah Church. He was licensed to preach the Gospel and ordained to the ministry by First Church, Clinton while a student at Mississippi College where he graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in 1940. At Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., he received a master's of theology degree in 1946. Married to Nella Dean (Indy) Mitchell in 1947, the couple served as missionaries to Argentina (1947-1952), Spain (mainland 1953-1980, Canary Islands 1981-1984), and Equatorial Guinea (1985-1987). During retirement they resided in Clinton, accepting short-term missionary assignments from time to time and serving as volunteer prayer coordinators for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson. Whitten was preceded in death by his wife; parents W. A. Whitten and Velma Edleman Whitten; and brothers Paul Whitten and W. A. Whitten II. He is survived by four children: Helen Whitten Cobb, David Charles Whitten, Margaret Whitten Drummond, and John William Whitten, thirty-nine grandchildren; forty great-grandchildren; and three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral service was Oct. 3. Lakewood Funeral Home of Jackson was in charge of arrangements.



WHITTEN



In the real estate business, they say there are three key factors — "Location, Location, Location." In the Kingdom Work of God, there are, among others, three key factors — "Leadership, Leadership, Leadership."

Throughout the Bible, God called and equipped leaders to give His people direction and encouragement. Moses was a leader — not perfect, but used of God. Joshua was a leader. These two men "led" Israel out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. A lack of leadership at Kadesh Barnea resulted in forty years of wandering in the wilderness. We must disciple and train LEADERS in every avenue of life.

The CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE (CLI) 2019 will enlist and equip high school young men and women from across our state to be a LEADER. This CLI will be conducted at Blue Mountain College on Monday through Friday, July 8-12, 2019. Thirty-six young men and thirty-six young ladies will participate in this second annual CLI.

## Christian Leadership Institute '19

If your association, church, Brotherhood, WMU, youth group, or family member would like to nominate and sponsor (\$250) a young man or lady, we need that information by April 1, 2019.

We will have eight keynote speakers Monday night through Friday morning, including our elected officials. There will be breakout sessions on practical training for leaders, such as public speaking, mediation, time management, and one-on-one discipleship. These young men and ladies are teenagers — there will be competitions and games. They will check in at 3:00 Monday afternoon and check out after lunch on Friday.

There will be male coaches who mentor and supervise the young

men in all activities Monday through Friday. There will be lady coaches who mentor and supervise the young ladies in all their activities. Discipleship is the key to leadership.

One highlight in the first CLI was Awards Night on Thursday night. Four scholarships totaling \$3,000 were awarded. We hope this total to be \$10,000 in college scholarships in the upcoming CLI. We welcome any scholarships from your church, business, or family.

Our Christian Action Commission has established the Austin Lee Digby Memorial Endowment Fund with the Mississippi Baptist Foundation. All interest from this perpetual fund will be used to finance future Christian Leadership Institutes. Any gift or

contribution (such as estate planning) to the Austin Lee Digby Memorial Endowment Fund will add to the principle (\$8,000) and increase the interest that can be invested in the lives of these young men and women till Jesus comes.

These young men and women will be challenged to run for public office — to be a public servant — "he that is greatest among you shall serve," (Matthew 20:26-27). But not everyone will "run" for public office, but everyone should vote in any upcoming election. Be a LEADER — VOTE.

We welcome any suggestions or questions concerning our CLI. We believe the CLI to be one of the best things we've done at the Christian Action Commission. It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness. We need your prayers and help with CLI '19.

Digby is executive director-treasurer of the Christian Action Commission. He can be reached at (601) 292-3329/office, (662) 284-9163/cell, or by e-mail at [kdigby@christianaction.com](mailto:kdigby@christianaction.com).

## Golf tournament promotes BMC professorship

WEST POINT, Ms. (Special) — Blue Mountain College (BMC) recently hosted the third annual Jim Futral Golf Classic at Old Waverly Golf Club in West Point.

The event, named for Mississippi Baptist Convention Board executive director-treasurer and BMC alum Jim Futral, serves the ultimate purpose of raising funds to fully support the Jim Futral Endowed Professorship in Biblical Studies and Proclamation at BMC, assuring preparation of those who will share God's word for generations to come.

BMC is one of three institutions of higher learning affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Convention. The others are Mississippi College in Clinton and William Carey University in Hattiesburg.

"This, the third golf tournament for the endowment of the chair for Biblical Studies and Proclamation, was the best one yet," Futral said. "I am so grateful for the Blue Mountain College administration and faculty and friends who have joined us along the way to participate in the golf classic."

"All the people and workers at Old Waverly Golf Course were super to work with and accommodated us at every turn."

"The goal of the golf tournament each year is not just to shoot a low score or to raise high dollars, but to provide a strong foundation for the perpetual teaching and preaching of the Word of God at Blue Mountain College."



**GOLFING WITH PURPOSE** — Joining Jim Futral (center), executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, at Old Waverly Golf Club in West Point were Tim Mims (left), assistant professor of Biblical Studies at Blue Mountain College (BMC), and Ron Meeks, BMC chair of biblical studies. (Uncredited photo)

"The goal of the golf tournament each year is not just to shoot a low score or to raise high dollars, but to provide a strong foundation for the perpetual teaching and preaching of the Word of God at Blue Mountain College."

Jim Futral

Mississippi Baptist Convention Board executive director-treasurer

According to the college, the 2018 event hosted 132 players on 33 teams. At last year's event, 124 players competed.

BMC President Barbara Childers McMillin noted, "As great as the 2017 event was, the 2018 Jim Futral Classic was even better. The support for this event continues to grow each year, which means that we are making steady progress toward our goal of endowing the Futral Professorship of Biblical Studies and Proclamation at Blue Mountain College."

"We are grateful for all who contributed to the success of this tournament, and we are looking forward to next year."

Event coordinator Nancy Grisham from the BMC office of community relations was pleased with the turnout. "Each year we have consistently increased in the number of participants and this year was no exception. We also exceeded our previous years in funds raised and are excited as gifts continue to come in," she said.

"I am truly grateful to all those who participated and for those who helped in making our third annual Jim Futral Golf Classic an event that was anticipated by so many. Next year's tournament will be September 23, and we are already beginning to receive inquiries."

Old Waverly Golf Club, founded in 1988, was host to the 1999 U.S. Women's Open Golf Championship. Old Waverly's second course, Mossy Oak Golf Club, opened in 2016.

## Just for the Record



**WADE CHURCH, WADE**, ordained three new deacons. Shown are Dusty Sherrell (Kelly), Carey Goff (Becky), pastor Branden Rogers, and Wilburn Goff (Jessica).



**DOTY SPRINGS CHURCH, ETHEL**, recently held a flag dedication in honor of all past, present, and future veterans. Flags were donated by church members and installed by the cemetery committee. Tony Fortenberry, pastor.



On October 20, **ROBINSON CHURCH, PEORIA**, hosted their annual Family Fall Festival. The community enjoyed trunk or treat, games, food and fellowship, and a hay ride.



**OAK GROVE CHURCH, MENDENHALL**, honored Buddy Keyes during their pastor appreciation day. Shown are Keyes and Jackie Keyes, who were honored with a gift and fellowship meal.



**TWIN LAKES CHURCH, MADISON**, gave a certificate for the preaching ministry to Scott Jones Oct. 14. Shown are Jones and pastor Hugh Smith.



**FIRST CHURCH, LAKE WASHINGTON**, held a baby dedication. Pictured are great-grandmother Shirley Graham, father Joshua Lynch holding Millie, pastor Jimmy McLendon, mother Heather Lynch, and grandparents Terry and Gay Lewis who is holding Julianna Jade.



**HAMILTON CHURCH, HAMILTON**, ordained Jason West as a minister of the gospel Oct. 21. Pastor Robert Moore presented West with his certificate to preach and a Bible. Shown are West and Moore.



**NEW LIBERTY CHURCH, MORTON**, held their annual pastor appreciation service in October. Paul Smith has been at New Liberty for 22 years. Shown are deacon chairman Jeff Latham, Smith, and Karen Smith.



Members of **MOORHEAD CHURCH, MOORHEAD**, provided lunch for Mississippi Delta Community College Baptist Student Union at their fall luncheon.

### In other Church News:

➤ The Talleys will be in concert at **First Church, Runnelstown**, Nov. 9, 7 p.m. Love offering. Hal Hood, pastor.

➤ **County Line Church, Overt**, is having a harvest festival Nov. 3, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Men's chili cookoff, cakewalk, games, candy, a bouncy house, hayride, and facepainting.

➤ **Bogue Chitto Church, Pricedale**, is hosting a fall festival Nov. 4, 5 - 7 p.m., including food, games, cakewalk, and hayride. Free. Youth will be selling Christian-themed T-shirts for \$15.

## Just for the Record

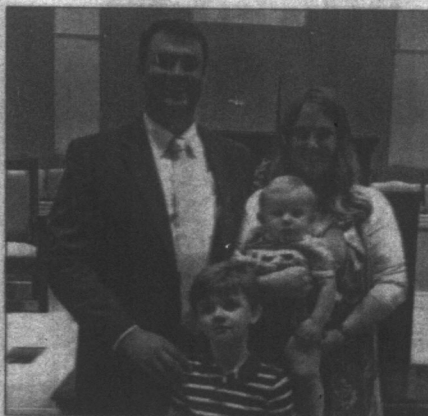


**ROCKY CREEK CHURCH, LUCEDALE**, held a deacon ordination service Sept. 9. Charlie Rogers and Verdia Brannan were ordained as deacons. Shown are Rogers, Mike Kittrell, and Brannan.

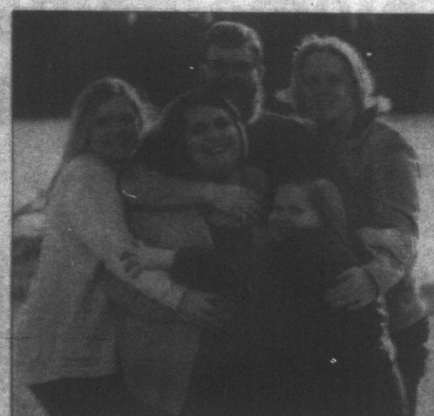


Believers Because of Friendship Church, Boiling Springs, S.C., led by Cecil Ringer, conducted Vacation Bible School and other activities for small churches in the Tunica area for the 17th time in August. The 30 adults worked with pastors of seven churches including St. Paul Believers (host church), Strangers Rest, Bethlehem (Lula), Pleasant Grove (Maud), Divine Deliverance (Crenshaw), First Church (Tunica) and Good Hope (Robinsonville). Over 100 people attended, with 139 Decisions made for Christ.

## Staff Changes



**MANTEE CHURCH, MANTEE**, has called Zach Sanford as pastor. He is shown with his wife of nine years, Aimee Prevost Sanford, Tupelo, and their boys Isaac and Grae. He most recently served as associate pastor and youth minister at Immanuel Church, Vicksburg.



**WADE CHURCH, WADE**, has called John "Boo" White as associate pastor, shown with his wife Misty and children Ashton, Garrett, and Annabell.

## College News



A medical drone under development at **WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY'S** College of Osteopathic Medicine in Hattiesburg, called Healthcare Integrated Rescue Operations (HiRO), was in the spotlight Oct. 8 during the American Osteopathic Association's annual conference in San Diego, Ca. Italo Subbarao (pictured), the medical school's chief operating officer, and the HiRO team demonstrated the drone's artificial intelligence software and capabilities.

### In other College News:

► **Mississippi College** will host Fall Preview Day Nov. 3. Guests will get opportunities to hear from a variety of speakers, including president Blake Thompson. Activities include sessions for parents to deal with financial aid and scholarships; a visit to the cadaver lab; food and tailgating and a football game; and visits to Providence Hill Farm. For more information, contact the admissions office at (601) 925-3800 or visit [mc.edu/previewday](http://mc.edu/previewday).

## Revivals & Homecomings

► **First Church, Itta Bena:** Homecoming, Nov. 4; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch; Paid in Full, music.

► **Camp Ground Church, Water Valley:** Revival, Nov. 4 - 7; Sun., 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Will Livingston, speaker.

► **Barefoot Springs Church, Pelahatchie:** Homecoming, Nov. 4; service, 11 a.m., followed by potluck lunch; Jerry Holmes, speaker; members of Cross Roads Church Praise Team, music.



**HARMONY CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN**, had homecoming and dedication of their new family life center Oct. 14. Owen King, pastor.

# Telemedicine added to GuideStone health plans

DALLAS (BP) — Consultations with doctors through telemedicine will be available in 2019 at no out-of-pocket charge for the majority of participants in the health plans of GuideStone Financial Services of the Southern Baptist Convention.



HAWKINS

The popular Teladoc service provides a consultation with board-certified physicians via phone or computer. Participants can have a prescription sent to a local pharmacy for pickup, though co-pays still apply.

Additional enhancements include a new diabetic management program, elimination of some inpatient co-pays in comprehensive plans, and reduced individual maximum out-of-pocket charges.

All the enhancements were implemented while keeping average rate increases below three percent for group plans. Personal plans participants will see rate increases related only to participant ages.

The actions are the lowest rate adjustments GuideStone has been able to provide in many

## GuideStone® Financial Resources

years, with many groups experiencing no rate change even with the added benefits.

"Our insurance team worked diligently to add significant value to our health plans while mitigating the impacts of medical inflation," said GuideStone president O.S. Hawkins. "While the impacts of medical inflation due to high utilization and unhealthy lifestyles along with the lingering impacts of federal health care reform are real, our team worked hard to enhance the products at minimal additional costs."

GuideStone's health plans are divided into three categories for 2019:

- comprehensive health plans, which provide the highest level of service designed to help with routine doctor visits and more in-depth plans.

- consumer-driven plans, which are HSA-qualified high deductible health plans designed to be paired with a health savings account.

- protection plans, which provide scaled-down benefits that cover occasional doctor visits. Protection plans include the new Secure Health 3000, introduced in 2018, that provides true medical coverage at the lowest monthly cost among GuideStone's health plans, on par with medical sharing ministries.

Dental, Medicare-coordinating, and term life plan rates remain unchanged for 2019.

For more information on the GuideStone plans, visit [GuideStoneInsurance.org](http://GuideStoneInsurance.org) and click on Get A Quote.

# GuideStone: Stay focused during stock market swings

DALLAS (BP) — Increased market volatility, which has commanded headlines in the days leading up to the November mid-term elections, has caught many by surprise. However, David S. Spika, chief strategic investment officer for GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas, noted that stock market volatility is a common and normal occurrence.



SPIKA

The stock market, as measured by the S&P 500 Index, experiences price swings of one percent or more 62 times a year on average. The same broad index of the stock market averages only 71 trading days between declines of five percent or more.

"The recent sell-off may feel unsettling to investors because they have been lulled into complacency by an historically low-volatility environment over the past couple of years," Spika said, "but it's actually quite normal and nothing to be concerned about at this time."

Fears of rising interest rates and the impact that higher rates may eventually have on the economy is driving this current market volatility, Spika said.

"As the economic cycle matures — we are now in the 10th year of the current expansion — economic growth and employment gains force the Federal Reserve to raise the Fed Funds rate to prevent an outbreak of excessive inflation," he said.

Additionally, fears about the ongoing trade negotiations with China, tariffs initiated by U.S. President Donald Trump, and the outcome of the mid-term elections on Nov. 6 may have stoked the current market volatility.

While volatility can be unnerving, the best course of action for retirement investors is to stick with their long-term asset allocation plans.

"It is impossible to time the market," GuideStone president O.S. Hawkins said. "In fact, the market has historically rewarded those with long-term perspectives. Retirement account performance moving forward is based on results of the financial markets in the future, not in the past."

"While it's easy to focus on the headlines and emotions brought on by the 24/7 news cycle, GuideStone believes it is best to avoid overreacting and for investors to stick to their long-term plans."

Spika noted that investors who believe they have too much equity (stock) exposure as a result of the strong run in the market since November 2016 may consider reallocating and balancing their portfolio.

One approach GuideStone offers to that end is the MyDestination Funds family of Target Date Funds. Retirement plan participants choose the fund closest to their desired retirement date; each fund is a "fund-of-funds" with a diversified asset allocation that becomes more conservative as the participant approaches the target date and through retirement.

For a copy of the prospectus with this and other information about the Funds, visit [www.guidestoneretirement.org/Individual/What-we-offer/Fund-Choices/MDFInformation](http://www.guidestoneretirement.org/Individual/What-we-offer/Fund-Choices/MDFInformation) and click "download a prospectus," or call toll-free (888) 98-GUIDE.

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Clue: F = W

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# Tammy Anderson to lead Mississippi WMU/WM

By William H. Perkins Jr.  
Editor

Tammy I. Anderson is the new executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union/Women's Ministries (WMU/WM) auxiliary to the Mississippi Baptist Convention, after the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Executive Committee approved her selection on Oct. 22.

Anderson, a 21-year consultant in the WMU/WM department, was the recommendation of the search committee after a one-year effort to replace Cindy Townsend, who resigned to accept a position at First Church, Jackson.

"As chairman of the Woman's Missionary Union and Women's Ministries Executive Director-Treasurer Search Committee, I speak for the committee with regard to their confidence in and support of Dr. Anderson as the new director of WMU and

Women's Ministries in Mississippi," said Marian Duncan of Starkville.

"She has the experience and rapport with the ladies across our state that qualify her to be the director of missions education and personal missions involvement in the local churches of our state," Duncan said.

Anderson, an Alabama native, holds three degrees from New Orleans Seminary: a doctor of philosophy in Christian education (Dec. 2008), a master of theology (May 2008), and master of divinity in Christian education (May 1993).

While at New Orleans Seminary, she was president of the Student Body Association in 1992 and 1993, and vice-president of the Student Body Association in 1991 and 1992.

Anderson also holds a bachelor of arts degree (May 1993), magna cum laude, with a major in religion/biblical studies from Judson College in Marion, Ala. Judson College



Tammy Anderson

is affiliated with the Alabama Baptist Convention.

While at Judson College, she received the Melvin J. Nall Christian Education Award and the Presidential Scholarship to New Orleans Seminary.

In addition to Anderson's tenure at WMU/WM, her min-

isterial service includes:

■ Minister of youth and children at Raymond Church, Jackson, from Feb. 1996-Oct. 1997.

■ Minister of youth at Lafitte Church, Saraland, Ala., from Sept. 1994-Aug. 1995.

■ Associate minister of youth at First Church, Columbia, from Oct. 1993-Aug. 1994.

She served Centrifuge summer youth camps as Bible study leader at Glorieta Assembly in New Mexico (1991); director of recreation and tracks at the University of Mobile in Alabama (1992); and director of recreation and tracks at Carson Newman College in Jefferson City, Mo. (1993).

"I am so honored to accept this new role in the Mississippi WMU/Women's Ministries Department. In the twenty-one years I've served as a missions consultant for Mississippi Baptists, it has been my joy to work alongside so many dedicated men and women across our state," Anderson said.

"I'm looking forward to many new relationships being developed. The opportunity to serve the Lord in this new role is a real blessing and I'm looking forward to continuing the work of Mississippi WMU/Women's Ministries," she said.

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, noted, "The Baptist women of our convention who are involved in the ministries of WMU/WM, as well as the diligent members of the search committee who brought this new executive director-treasurer to the forefront, should be commended for their thoughts and prayers during the year-long process," noted.

"We celebrate with them as they embark on this new era of WMU/WM ministries dedicated to the honor and glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," he said.

Anderson can be contacted at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. E-mail: tander-son@mbcb.org.

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## Former Atlanta fire chief reaches \$1.2M settlement with city council

ATLANTA (BP) — The Atlanta

City Council has agreed to a \$1.2 million settlement with former fire chief Kelvin Cochran over his January 2015 termination for his views about marriage and sexuality.



COCHRAN

The council voted 11-3 after an executive session Oct. 15, during which city attorneys recommended the settlement and legal fees negotiated with the religious liberty organization Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), which has handled Cochran's court case, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported.

Beyond the council's decision, Cochran told Baptist Press (BP) Oct. 17 that God has been faithful through what he calls "the fiery trial."

Cochran has had numerous opportunities to give his testimony in worship services and to speak at men's meetings and conferences. He also completed a doctorate in interdisciplinary leadership in May through Creighton University in Omaha, Ne.

The council decision was celebrated by ADF but berated by former mayor Kasim Reed, who fired Cochran, a highly decorated fire official and former U.S. Fire Administrator under U.S. President Barack Obama.

Prompting the settlement was a federal judge's ruling last December declaring as unconstitutional city requirements that an employee must obtain pre-clearance for publishing a book such as Cochran's 162-page men's devotional that included a brief section describing homosexual behavior as immoral.

The Christian-based devotional book and the section on homosexuality eventually led to Cochran's firing by Reed.

Federal Judge Leigh Martin May granted summary judgment to Cochran that Atlanta's pre-clearance rules violated the Constitution's First Amendment by restraining speech in advance and inviting "unbridled discretion" by the city to approve or deny outside work.

However, Cochran and the Alliance Defending Freedom did not succeed on the other First Amendment claims in the case. May granted summary judgment to the city on Cochran's claims of freedom of speech retaliation, freedom of association retaliation, and viewpoint discrimination.

She also refused to agree that Atlanta had violated Cochran's free exercise of religion.

ADF senior counsel Kevin Theriot stated in a news release, "The government can't force its employees to get its permission before they engage in free speech. It also can't fire them for exercising that First Amendment freedom, causing them to

lose both their freedom and their livelihoods."

Theriot said the city "is compensating Chief Cochran as it should, and we hope this will serve as a deterrent to any government that would trample upon the constitutionally protected freedoms of its public servants."

The Journal-Constitution reported that the city had "concluded that a federal court ruling in the case from December left taxpayers exposed to an even larger payout if they didn't settle with Cochran."

A spokesperson for Atlanta's current mayor, Keisha Lance Bottoms, was quoted as saying, "The comments of Kelvin Cochran were not reflective of who Atlanta is as a tolerant and inclusive city... [Based] upon findings of the Court that could have resulted in taxpayers paying millions of dollars in damages and litigation fees, a negotiated settlement was recommended by legal counsel."

A city investigation under Reed found no evidence of discrimination by Cochran in directing the fire department. Cochran, in comments to BP in November 2017, said he created the Atlanta Fire Rescue Doctrine to establish "a culture of justice and equity" and to seek to remove "racism, sexism, favoritism, cronyism, anything that would interfere with a wholesome work environment for any people group within the fire department."

## DISASTER

cont. from p. 1

response to our fellow southeastern states as they share the love of Jesus through disaster relief efforts."

MBCB executive director-treasurer Jim Futral expressed his appreciation to Mississippi Baptists for their faithful giving. "I am so grateful that Mississippi Baptists are in a position to make these gifts and send these volunteers to help the Baptists in these states that gave so much to us after Hurricane Katrina in 2005."

Funding for the gifts comes from two basic sources, according to Barri A. Shirley, MBCB associate executive director for business services: donors' gifts and the Board Operating Fund.

"The donor-imposed gifts restricted for use with Disaster Relief were received with that designation attached, and provided the source of funds for our gift to Texas Baptist Men and their Disaster Relief efforts," Shirley said. "These gifts must be used for Disaster Relief and therefore did not require action by the Executive Committee."

"The Board's Operating Fund was accessed by the Executive Committee for the funds sent to Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The Board Operating Fund is the combination and accumulation of unspent Board program dollars from prior years' budgets, plus undesignated interest earnings from investments."

"Only the Executive Committee and/or the 100-member Board are authorized to spend these funds."

In related news, the temporary disaster relief headquarters at First Church, Albany, Ga., where more than 75 Mississippi Baptist chainsaw and mud-out volunteers have been deployed since Hurricane Michael, will be closing as individ-



**CLEARING THE AREA** - Volunteers prepare to bring down a heavily damaged tree in the Albany, Ga., area where Mississippi Baptists have been working since Hurricane Michael devastated the region in mid-October. Southern Baptist churches in other areas of the country are being asked to pair with damaged or destroyed churches to begin repair and rebuilding. (Uncredited photo)

ual churches from around the country enter the next phase of recovery and begin pairing with damaged or destroyed churches for repair and rebuilding, according to Shane McGivney, MBCB men's ministry director and coordinator of the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force.

In addition, the Task Force's mass feeding operation based at Highland Church in Panama City, Fla., will close at the end of this week after preparing 14,000 hot meals per day for victims and first responders since the 25 Mississippi Baptist volunteers arrived there, McGivney said.

McGivney stressed that he wanted all Mississippi Baptist churches to know the next phase of recovery efforts has begun as urgent needs continue to be met but long-range plans begin to take shape.

Southern Baptist churches across the country are part-

nering with churches in need in the devastated areas, so the work of repairing and rebuilding those affected churches can get started. The immediate needs have been and are being met, so it's time to build relationships church-to-church," he said.

Mississippi Baptist churches interested in partnering with churches affected by the storms should contact McGivney at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3335 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 335. E-mail: smcgivney@mbcb.org.

Checks should be made payable to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and designated to Disaster Relief on the memo line, then mailed to MBCB at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. For more information, contact the MBCB Men's Ministry Department at the above address. Telephone:

(601) 292-3335 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 335. E-mail: dvail@mbcb.org.

"The Bible talks about the urgency of the harvest in John 4:35. There is a window of opportunity for each harvest, and then that window closes forever," McGivney said. "Right

now, our harvest window of opportunity in these stricken areas is wide open to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with an incredible number of people and families."

"One day, this window of opportunity will close forever. All of us need to play our part while there's still time."

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## Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: [baptistrecord@mbcb.org](mailto:baptistrecord@mbcb.org)

## Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)

2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.

(I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

## With Works • James 2:14-26

In previous verses, James encouraged the Diaspora, Jewish Christians who had scattered due to persecution, to live out their Christian faith. He reminded them (and us) that believers can endure trials, knowing God is at work in all things. He also expressed that believers should respond to Jesus' work in their lives with obedience and compassion. That obedience occurs when we take what we have learned from God's Word and live it out loud.

In this section of his letter, James considers another important characteristic about faith, "What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?" (v. 14) In this lesson we will recognize that true faith produces visible change that is demonstrated through works.

### Dead Faith (James 2:14-17)

James declared that faith without any demonstration of obedience is dead. He wrote, "If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,' and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself" (vv. 15-17). A person's failure to obediently act

on his or her professed faith reveals a false faith, a dead faith, the kind of faith that does not save.

### Working Faith (James 2:18-19)

James explained that faith is more than a statement of belief. "But someone may well say, 'You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works and I will show you my faith by my works'" (v. 18). We can say just about anything, but can we back it up? For instance,

what if I say that I can swim but then sink in deep water? Or, what if you tell me that you can fly and then when you jump out of the tree you fall flat on your face? Pretty crazy, right? That's just how crazy we sound when we say we have faith in God but have no works to back up our statement. James pointed to the demons, who believe certain truths about God but do not have faith in Him. "You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder" (v. 19). Demons know by mental assent

that God exists. However, they do not have true faith that leads to salvation. James asked, "But are you willing to recognize...that faith without works is useless?" (v. 20). True faith is more than intellectual adherence; it is the placing of one's full trust in Jesus for salvation.

### Saving Faith (James 2:20-26)

We must realize that, without works, we show that we do not have the kind of faith that saves. The kind of faith that saves our souls also produces works. James pointed to the story of Abraham and the offering of Isaac (Gen. 22). He wrote, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?" (Jas. 2:21). Abraham was obedient to what the Lord commanded and by faith believed that the Lord would provide another sacrifice. According to my Bible concordance, the word justification means, "A vindication or setting right of a wrong. The

act of God by which He declares a believing sinner to be in a righteous position before Him, based on the substitutionary death of Christ and His resurrection." By this evidence of his faith, Abraham was justified. He wrote, "You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected..." (v. 22). The word perfected does not mean "without sin." Instead, the phrase means that faith has been made complete. He also referred to the story of Rahab to illustrate the relationship between faith and works (Jos. 2, Heb. 11). He emphasized that true faith is demonstrated in actions.

To sum this up, one does works as a result of his or her saving faith, not as a means of securing salvation. While Paul declared that salvation is by faith alone to counter those who taught that salvation results from good deeds, James wrote that faith produces good deeds to counter those who taught that works are not necessary in a Christian's life. True faith produces a visible change, moves a person to godly action, and is demonstrated through works.

McGraw is a NAMB-endorsed chaplain at Louisiana State Penitentiary and member of Woodville Church, Woodville.



### Explore the Bible

with Liz McGraw

## A Prayer for Ourselves • Matthew 6:11; Isaiah 38:1-7, 15-17

The first part of Jesus' model prayer is about our Father, who is, according to Jesus, holy and heavenly. Then we are to seek that His will be done on earth. In this plea, we surrender to His specific plans concerning us individually and collectively. After that, we are to pray about our needs. Matthew 6:11 reads, "Give us this day our daily bread," (KJV).

Prayer is far more than only bringing our needs and requests to God, though we usually begin our prayers with a list of our most pressing needs. Then we add the name of Jesus at the end of our prayers to justify our requests and to sound more spiritual: "In Jesus' name, amen." Jesus gave us a different approach. In the Model Prayer, the prayer is half over before a single personal request is made. When we are focused on God, seeking His honor, and desiring His lordship and will, we then are in the best mindset to present our daily needs to Him. This lesson will focus on our personal needs, or prayers of supplication. Next week, we will focus on our prayers for others, or intercession.

Jesus stressed that our requests be for our daily bread. In that day, most people spent much of their time each day simply seeking enough food for

their families for that day alone. That is beyond our comprehension with our full pantries and overflowing grocery store shelves. Jesus also taught in Matthew 6:34, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," (KJV). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus instructed His disciples to live in the moment, trust God for our daily needs, and decide daily to follow the Lord (Matthew 7:24-27, KJV).

Note that Jesus led His disciples to ask in prayer for daily needs, but He does not teach how the Lord will answer those prayers. This passage is descriptive of how we are commanded to ask the Lord for our needs each day. It is not prescriptive, however, of how God chooses to answer every request. He is still sovereign. Prayer brings us in line with God's will but does not always bring God in line with our wills.

He is the Lord and we are His servants. The Model Prayer reminds us that God desires our daily surrender as well as our seeking our needs daily.

James 2:15-16 reads, "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food. And one of you say unto them, 'Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled;' notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" (KJV). Notice the further emphasis on daily food.

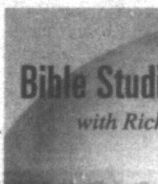
In Luke 9:23, Jesus taught, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me," (KJV). Again, the emphasis is on dying to self daily.

While as Christians, we trust the Lord for our futures and to forgive our pasts, Jesus desires an active, daily relationship with believers, not a stale one. You may be on one of those meal plans, where every week frozen and fresh food is shipped to your home,

along with details on how to prepare it. Even so, you still eat it one meal at a time. We do not pray once a month to cover all our heart's praise, our monthly needs, and monthly directions from the Lord, all in advance. We pray daily for our daily needs. God told the woman at the well that God is seeking people to worship Him in spirit and truth. The truth taught in the Lord's Prayer is that He desires a living, daily relationship with each believer.

Attending church once or twice a month and listening to a sermon is not sufficient for us to have a living, vibrant relationship with Jesus. Like attempting to eat only once a week, occasionally attending church is not enough. That is why He emphasized a daily relationship with Him. Yesterday is done and tomorrow has not yet arrived. Today is the day to spend time with the Lord. Think about it. When we praise the Lord each day, seek His will for each day, and ask for His provision each day, we have daily relationship with Jesus. We already live life daily, so let's live it daily with Him.

Henson is a member of Meadow Grove Church, Brandon.



### Bible Studies for Life

with Rick Henson



# U.N. climate report seen as outside of Scripture

**NASHVILLE (BP)** — A United Nations report calling for “unprecedented” changes in energy use to limit climate change is unnecessarily alarmist and seems informed by a non-biblical view of human life, say both a Southern Baptist climate scientist and a seminary president.

“Look at the real data,” said John Christy, a former lead author for the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and distinguished professor of atmospheric science at the University of Alabama at Huntsville. Christy is also a former Southern Baptist missionary.

“Remember that human life is precious and thus providing access to [energy sources] that enhance human life is really the moral track to take here. I just wouldn’t be too excited about these reports from government

entities like the United Nations.”

The IPCC released a report Oct. 7 recommending governments cut carbon emissions in a manner that would limit global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Such cuts would require “far-reaching” and “unprecedented” modifications of human society, according to the report, but would limit sea-level rise, Arctic ice-melting, and coral reef reduction.

Among changes required to meet the 1.5-degree goal, according to the report:

- Renewable sources would have to supply at least 70% of the world’s electricity by 2050.

- Coal use to produce electricity would have to be virtually eliminated.

- At least 1.2 billion acres of pastureland and food crops for humans and animals would have to be converted to grow crops designated for energy use and trees that store carbon.

“We’ve delivered a message to the governments,” said Jim Skea, current co-chair of the IPCC panel that produced

the report, according to The Washington Post. “It’s now their responsibility... to decide whether they can act on it.”

R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., said the IPCC’s suggested path forward “isn’t really a serious proposal” because “the people who came up with this report and the people who are reporting about the report are flying on airplanes, and they are driving in cars, and they are using all the artifacts” of the Industrial Revolution which the report implies should be scaled back.

The report has some scientific credibility, Mohler said Oct. 9 on his podcast The Briefing, but “there is a deep anti-humanism that runs through so much of the ecological movement” and motivates proposals to protect the environment at the expense of human well-being.



MOHLER

God’s mandate to humans in Genesis 1:28 calls them to both care for creation and to harness it for human flourishing, Mohler said — not return to pre-Industrial Revolution ways of life.

Christy told Baptist Press scientists generally agree the earth is warming and that humans have played some role in the warming, but “no one knows the percentage of warming that may be due to greenhouse gases [though] in our research it doesn’t look like much.”

In addition, the effects of warming are less significant than is sometimes portrayed, Christy said, noting God made the world “pretty tough.”

“When you just look at real-world data, you don’t find the catastrophic changes occurring” claimed by some environmentalists, he pointed out. Even the IPCC “has to admit tornadoes actually have declined in the United States in the last 60-70 years. Atlantic hurricanes actually have declined in the last hundred years.”

The world should continue to burn fossil fuels but “make sure the poisons don’t go into the atmosphere, like the sulfur dioxides and the nitrogen oxides,” Christy said.

As a former missionary in Africa, Christy said he has seen how energy can improve the lives of the world’s poor, which is more important than advancing a scientifically unfounded agenda.

“When you’ve lived in a place like Africa, you know that life without energy is brutal and short,” Christy said. “The drive you should have, if you have a moral sense about yourself, is that you would want to provide energy for people who don’t have it, because energy is a key factor in creating a longer and better life for the billion poor people who don’t even have electricity.”

A 2007 Southern Baptist Convention resolution on global warming urged Southern Baptists “to proceed cautiously in the human-induced global warming debate in light of conflicting scientific research.”

## Pastors approve of Trump’s job performance, but not by much

**NASHVILLE (BP)** — A slim majority of pastors say they approve of the job U.S. President Donald Trump has done in the White House, according to a new study by the Nashville-based evangelical research arm of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention that specializes in surveys about faith in culture and matters that affect churches.

A LifeWay Research study of Protestant senior pastors found 51% approve of how Trump has handled the job, with 25% strongly approving. The study was conducted Aug. 29-Sept. 11.

“After almost two years of actions and statements from the White House, most pastors likely consider some positive and others negative,” said Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research. “When asked to evaluate the president’s job performance with no neutral option, most pastors approve.”

Still, 28% of those surveyed say they disapprove of Trump’s leadership and another 20% say they aren’t sure.

“Compared to the middle of [former U.S.] President [Barack] Obama’s first term, we see twice as many pastors say they’re undecided on President Trump’s job performance,” McConnell said.

In the lead-up to the 2010 midterm elections, a LifeWay Research survey found 30% of Protestant pastors approved of Obama’s job performance. Sixty-one percent disapproved and only nine percent said they were not sure.

“There is no lack of information on what President Trump is doing or how he is doing it,” said McConnell, “so the undecided posture appears to be an unwillingness to identify with either of the political sides that have emerged in American politics.”

The hesitancy of pastors to take sides where Donald Trump is concerned stretches back to the presidential election.

Despite 52% of Protestant pastors identifying as a Republican and only 18% calling themselves Democrat in the LifeWay Research survey prior to the November 2016 election, only 32% said they planned to vote for Trump. A full 40% said they were undecided, with 19% planning to vote for Hillary Clinton.

Pastors’ opinions on Trump’s performance highlight divisions among them which often fall along political lines. African-American pastors are the least likely to approve of the president’s handling of the job. Only four percent approve of his performance, while 85% disapprove.

Outside of African-Americans, pastors are much more split — 54% percent approve, along with 47% of pastors of other ethnicities.

“In 2016, only six percent of African-American pastors identified as Republican and nothing in President Trump’s first two years has generated approval from African-American pastors beyond that level,” McConnell noted.

Younger pastors are the least likely age group to ap-

prove of the president’s performance. Forty-one percent of those ages 18-44 say he’s done a good job, while 56% of those age 45 and older support his job performance.

Those young pastors are also more likely to say they’re not sure about the president. A quarter are unsure, compared with 18% of pastors ages 55-64 and 16% of pastors ages 65 and older.

In 2016, pastors ages 18-44 were the least likely to identify with a political party and least likely to support Donald Trump as a candidate, McConnell said.

“They are less tied to traditional political identities and remain slow to express approval of President Trump,” he observed.

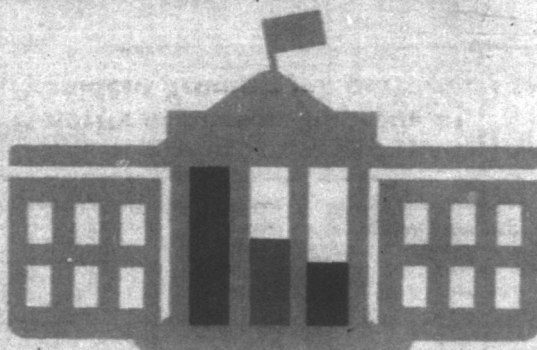
Pastors’ responses are also split across denominations. Pentecostals (86%) and Baptists (68%) are most likely to approve of the president’s performance.

Church of Christ pastors (55%) and Lutherans (41%) are more split, while few Presbyterian/Reformed (28%) and Methodist (25%) say they support the job Trump has done.

Even in the denominational divides, views on the president’s performance largely follow political leanings, McConnell noted.

In 2016, pastors in Pentecostal (76%) and Baptist (67%) churches were most likely to be Republicans. Pastors in Presbyterian/Reformed (29%) and Methodist (25%) churches were least likely to say they’re part of the GOP.

### Majority of pastors approve of President Trump’s job performance



■ 51% Approve ■ 28% Disapprove ■ 20% Not Sure

Among Protestant pastors

LifeWay

LifeWayResearch.com

Other findings in the 2018 survey include:

- Pastors of churches with less than 50 in attendance are the least likely to approve of Trump’s job performance (42%).

- Pastors in the South (55%) and West (57%) are more likely to approve than those in the Northeast (40%).

- Male pastors (56%) are more likely to approve than female pastors (30%).

- Pastors with no college degree (71%) or a bachelor’s degree (67%) are more likely to approve than those with a mas-

ter’s degree (41%) or a doctoral degree (52%).

- Self-identified evangelical pastors (63%) are more likely to approve than self-identified mainline pastors (41%).

“With the majority of Protestant pastors identifying as Republican, it is not surprising that a majority approve of President Trump in his first term,” McConnell said. “Clearly, pastors’ political views factor in how they evaluate the president’s leadership and accomplishments in the first half of his term.”

For more information on this study, visit [LifeWayResearch.com](http://LifeWayResearch.com).